

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY

FULL BOARD MEETING

9:00 a.m.

August 25, 2021

Teleconference

Originating at:

3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 120

Anchorage, Alaska

Trustees Present:

Chris Cooke, Chair

Verne' Boerner

Brent Fisher

Anita Halterman

John Sturgeon

Rhonda Boyles

Kevin Fimon

Trust Staff Present:

Mike Abbott

Steve Williams

Eric Boyer

Carol Howarth

Miri Smith-Coolidge

Kelda Barstad

Valette Keller

Katie Baldwin-Johnson

Mike Baldwin

Autumn Veal

Alison Biastock

Luke Lind

Kat Roch

Travis Welch

Jimael Johnson

Trust Land Office:

Wyn Menefee

Jusdi Doucet

Also participating:

Lisa Morley; Bev Schoonover; Lisa Cauble; Kristin Vandagriff; Jenifer Galvan; Keyda Harris; Amy Robinson; Bill Mike; Carmen Wenger; Ian Wright; Jennifer Reed; Commissioner Adam Crum; Deputy Commissioner Sara Longan.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR COOKE called the meeting to order and began with a roll call. All trustees were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHAIR COOKE asked for any announcements.

TRUSTEE BOERNER announced that this board meeting was her last meeting as President and CEO of the Alaska Native Health Board. She stated that following her last board meeting of the Alaska Native Health Board there was a celebration of her time there. She thanked trustee staff for participating in that and being present. She continued that her purpose for sharing was that she will have some gifts to disclose. She will be notifying the staff about those gifts.

CHAIR COOKE wished Trustee Boerner well in her next adventure of pursuing her graduate degree. He stated that she will not only do well, but will be much better prepared and qualified to return to other leadership positions on behalf of Alaskans. He thanked her for her efforts and asked for any other announcements.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

CHAIR COOKE moved to the agenda and stated that Mr. Abbott had a late change.

MOTION: A motion to approve the agenda was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.

MR. ABBOTT stated that Commissioner Crum had asked to move his presentation to 2:00 p.m., which would advance the Finance Committee Report and the FY22 Amended Budget Report by 30 minutes each.

CHAIR COOKE called the question and asked for unanimous consent.

There being no objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.

ETHICS DISCLOSURE

CHAIR COOKE moved to the ethics disclosures. Hearing none, he moved to the minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: A motion to approve the minutes from May 26, 2021, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOERNER.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any corrections or comments.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked about the brief discussion on different points of the presentation and if the conversation had been captured.

CHAIR COOKE stated that it was the presentation on the Commission on Aging and noted that

the discussion did not pertain to any motion or action item. The discussion was captured in the complete transcript of the meeting. He asked if there was an objection to unanimous consent.

There being no objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.

CHAIR COOKE moved to the minutes of June 30, 2021.

MOTION: A motion to approve the minutes of June 30, 2021, was made by TRUSTEE BOYLES; seconded by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

There being no objection, the MOTION was APPROVED.

CHAIR COOKE noted for the trustees that in every packet there is a list of future meeting dates, not only for the trustees, but also for the partner boards and for other matters that may be of interest to the trustees. He stated that it is the policy of the board and himself to encourage anyone who is interested in attending these meetings to do so. He encouraged trustees to attend some of the meetings that interest them; request authorization to do that, and whatever expense involved may be paid by the Trust.

TRUSTEE BOERNER thanked the Chair for sharing that. She has attended several of the advisory board meetings and found them to be enriching and very valuable. She also encouraged attending.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN commented that she had attended many of the board meetings and stated that many of them are virtual. They are very informative and great to listen in, especially when they do the advocacy meetings. There is a lot of discussion with regard to the legislative efforts.

CHAIR COOKE stated that the bylaws are also in the packet, and we would be referring to them in the course of meetings over the next two days. He moved to the Mission Moment.

MISSION MOMENT

MR. BOYER introduced Alaska Behavioral Health, one of our partner organizations. They are a nonprofit community behavioral health provider in Anchorage with an office and campus. He continued that the topic of this Mission Moment is “Peer Support Specialist.” Funds from the Trust over the last couple of years supported the buildout of the peer support program, which has had an impact on the beneficiaries. He introduced Jenifer Galvan, a program manager at Alaska Behavioral Health that oversees the Peer Support Services, and Keyda Harris, one of her staff who is a beneficiary and came through the Peer Support Program

MS. GALVAN introduced herself as a Peer Support/Peer Review Manager at Alaska Behavioral Health and had just moved to Anchorage. She survived 12 years of childhood trauma; physical, emotional at the hands of three women that were supposed to love her unconditionally. In 2004 she had successfully completed four brain surgeries and realized the full impact of having that trauma. She had seizures, which were her trauma coping skill. She would seizure and then, being fatigued and exhausted, would check out for a couple hours and come back, and things would be great. When the surgery happened, she had little girls and no will to survive; was not functioning as an adult, and prayed to not wake up. She continued that she met two really

powerful people in her life, her now husband and her late mother-in-law. They were the people who saw that she was broken and loved her without judgment and gave her space to heal. She signed temporary custody of her daughters to her sister for a year. She did her work and took her first college course in interhuman services. Her professor told her to find resources that were unfamiliar to her, and she sought out domestic violence. She stated that she is a trained certified domestic violence advocate and is trained in victims of violent crimes to be a court advocate and call-taker. She continued that she is also trained in sexual trauma and abuse to meet people in the emergency rooms and hand them off with the resources. She learned about peer support in her last course around sexual trauma. Washington State was coming out with their program in 2009, and she drove to Yakima, roomed with two complete strangers, and started her journey as a peer. She added that she continued through her Bachelor's degree and part of her Master's before realizing she would never be a therapist. Peer work was where her heart was, and she did it for ten years in Washington. She was in ACT programs, TLP, did inpatient, worked a suicide hotline, and did anything to make sure people were not alone. When she got her position at Alaska Behavioral Health as the solo peer for the entire agency, she was mortified. She was excited about the new movement of peers, but having to have a criminal background, a drug addiction and a mental health diagnosis as the only way to be a good peer did not match her. She survived trauma, was raised by an addict, both her daughters and sisters were addicted to drugs, but she never picked up a drug in her life. After the conference, she emailed her leadership, told them it was not right and pitched a couple of her papers from college. She told them if they trusted her, she would prove them right. In 2019, the Trust awarded Alaska Behavioral Health a grant, and they got a state-approved curriculum; just under 130 people were trained in the nine months of having that grant. This year they were awarded the contract; they are halfway through with about 170 trained; close to 300 will be trained by the end of the year. She stated that she had met some amazing people and was blessed to train Keyda Harris, who is currently working in Fairbanks. She was one of the fall trainees and was one of the women who showed up with a chip on her shoulder. She took a leap of faith and applied for the job and is just one that ABH lucked out with. The curriculum is approved, and we are in line to have 20 trained trainers for the curriculum around the state by the end of this calendar year. She asked Ms. Harris to tell her story.

MS. HARRIS stated that from the ages of four to 14 she suffered a gamut of abuses. As an adult, her choices continued by choosing people who were like her abusers. She had a variety of mental health diagnoses from those traumas, but had little to no faith in the mental health system because it was always a shuffle from one provider to the next, with always having to retell her story over and over. At the height of COVID, she came across Jen's post on Facebook: "Become a peer support specialist. Tell your story. Share your story," and she applied. She went to the in-person classes, met everyone and met Jen. Immediately, her heart melted because here was a person who understood her completely and what made her how she was. In training, she learned a lot about herself that she did not know, and continually learns about herself through her clients. She shared that they listen to her and absorb her knowledge just like she did through Jenifer. She stated that this peer support training has been the best thing that ever happened in her life, and she is surprised by the turnaround she has made. She continued that it was an amazing journey, and she hoped to continue reaching out by training other peers to do what she does now. She thanked the trustees for having faith in Jenifer, because she has unequivocally changed all of their lives for the better.

CHAIR COOKE thanked both and asked the trustees for any comments or questions.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN commended both of the ladies for taking a bad situation and finding the silver lining. Keep doing the work you do.

TRUSTEE BOERNER stated a word of appreciation for blazing that trail and broadening our perspectives and horizons. She also found both inspirational and informative the verbalizing that the abuse continued by choosing people similar to the abusers. There is power in the statement of continuing to learn about myself through the clients and no longer to live in trauma repeatedly. She thanked them for sharing.

MR. FIMON thanked Jenifer and Keyda for their powerful stories and that it was important to hear about the impact on one another and on all of the clients. It also speaks to how we all need someone at times that has been through the same things to help learn about ourselves and to also help others.

CHAIR COOKE asked for an overview of what exactly Alaska Behavioral Health is and what they do.

MS. GALVAN stated that Alaska Behavioral Health is not what it was in 2018 when she came on. She continued that there is now a peer program and other entities that have expanded our service population and accessibility. As far as primary services for herself, she came on to the 811 Housing Program, which is a housing voucher that fast-tracks people with a funding source that meets them up to the time they get their Alaska housing voucher. She explained that part of the expectation with that contract was that there was a peer support professional that would support the consumers moving from assisted-living facilities into independent living. It continues to be normalizing struggles of behavioral health and addiction and how trauma and symptoms play into how to respond.

CHAIR COOKE asked Ms. Harris how she learned of ABH and when she started making contact with them.

MS. HARRIS replied that she learned of Alaska Behavioral Health in 2016 when she moved to Alaska, and she has been a beneficiary of the services since that time. She stated that it was always her goal to do what she does now, but she did not know how to go about it. She continued that she had always been very self-aware of her diagnoses and how they affected her. Being a client, she learned how to deal with them. It has been an awesome, wonderful journey, and she has been helped in a myriad of ways.

CHAIR COOKE thanked both for sharing their stories.

MR. ABBOTT stated that Alaska Behavioral Health used to be Anchorage Community Mental Health and was Anchorage's largest community mental health provider. They rebranded in part as a result of Fairbanks' locally based, community mental health provider failing. The State, through a grant, encouraged then Anchorage Community Mental Health to serve Fairbanks, as well.

MR. WILLIAMS talked about how the Trust partnered with Alaska Behavioral Health with

funding. He explained that this is an example of how the catalytic funding was used to develop a new program type for one of the largest community behavioral health service providers in the state. It allowed them to take that funding, develop a curriculum, bring in the peers to help provide the critical services that were needed for the clientele, and expand it. Jenifer developed a curriculum which is being shared with other community behavioral health providers as they start to develop peer support services within the organization. The impacts about being able to empower the individuals who have had these lived experiences, as individuals, as professionals, and to share them. The impacts on the individual beneficiaries cannot be overstated. He shared that this is an example of the sort of impact that the Trust funds can have for the system at large. He also thanked Ms. Harris and Ms. Galvan for sharing their stories.

TRUSTEE BOYLES thanked them for tying that to Bridge and Crisis Now, and being the other arm in Fairbanks.

CHAIR COOKE thanked all again, and moved to the CEO update.

STAFF REPORT AND CEO UPDATE

MR. ABBOTT noted that the comments to the Legislative Auditor related to the preliminary report were submitted, and we are now waiting for the final report from the auditor. He continued that when it comes out it will be posted, along with the response on the website. There will not be any action required of the Trust from this point forward. He continued to some of the highlights, beginning with the effort to refinance some of the commercial real estate assets which has significantly advanced. He added that refinancing opportunities will continue to be evaluated. Any further refinancing would come back to the trustees for authorization. He noted that the comment period for the mineral lease at Ester Dome near Fairbanks has closed, and the TLO is in the process of evaluating those comments and considering the next steps. He mentioned that the U.S. Forest Service Land Exchange is inching positively toward completion. He continued to the gravel lease for a Trust parcel outside of Wasilla. He explained that that was met with significant opposition from local residents, and when the lessee went before the Mat-Su Borough Planning Commission to get the conditional-use permit, it was denied. He added that an appeal of that decision is processing, and it will likely be heard this fall. He moved to the letter from the Governor's Office on the FY23 budget which would be discussed in detail tomorrow, and concluded his report.

TRUSTEE STURGEON asked about the approach to the Planning Commission that is against the material sale.

MR. ABBOTT replied that they are in the process of communicating with the grantees, the partners and stakeholders in the Mat-Su Valley to make sure they are informed about it and making sure that they know about public comment opportunities that may be available. He added that it was uncertain that the Borough would be processing this as a concern on the merits of the gravel pit.

TRUSTEE BOYLES asked about the comments on Ester Dome, if there was a predominant or dominant concern in them.

MR. ABBOTT replied that the review of the comments have not yet been completed in full. He added that the most common concern was the proximity of a potential mine in an area with an

extensive mining history and existing ongoing small-scale operations, that the prospect of a larger-scale operation was disappointing. There will be a more complete report on the comments and responses as the TLO finishes that work.

TRUSTEE STURGEON made a disclosure that he received a copy of the letter with a lengthy call from the Governor's Office, which he had not returned.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated the same disclosure.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Abbott for the report, and called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE reconvened the meeting and stated that all trustees were present. He recognized Amy Robinson of the Department of Law who spoke about the role of the fiduciary.

MS. ROBINSON introduced herself and stated that she is an assistant attorney general. She added that her supervisor, Chief Assistance Bill Mike, was also on the line. She stated that she read the trustees' bios and was excited to get to know them better because of all the diverse and accomplished backgrounds. She continued, what a fiduciary is; what fiduciary duties are; she briefly discussed the nature of the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the Trust Authority; she identified who the Trust beneficiaries are; identified specific fiduciary duties codified for the Board of Trustees; and discussed how those fiduciary duties are carried out. The definition of a fiduciary is one who transacts business, handles money and property, not for self-interest, but for the benefit of others, implying and necessitating great confidence and trust, and a high degree of good faith. She explained that there is also a fiduciary duty to protect the corpus of the Mental Health Trust Fund.

MR. ABBOTT thanked Ms. Robinson for the support of the work on the Legislative Audit, as well as other projects.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Robinson for the presentation, the effort and for the materials provided. He recognized Carol Howarth for the Finance Committee Report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MS. HOWARTH stated that at the last meeting the revenue expectation and the budget recommendations were reviewed. Also talked about was last year's performance, preliminarily. She continued that those numbers would not be finalized until the State closes its books at the end of August. She added that after that, the work on the financial reports for the regular audit will begin. She stated that there was one motion presented to the Finance Committee regarding inflation-proofing, which was recommended to present to the Full Board.

MOTION: A motion that the Board of Trustees approve the designation of \$26,300,000 of Alaska Mental Health Trust earnings as principal for the purpose of inflation-proofing was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOERNER.

CHAIR COOKE asked how this related to the recommendation by the Finance Committee where the number \$61,230,300 was in Motion No. 1.

MS. HOWARTH explained that we thought that, using the new statutory method budget reserves, \$61 million could easily be used for inflation-proofing. In fact, using the new methodology there is basically \$26 million available for inflation-proofing to maintain the 400 percent target. She continued that it did not affect the amount of money in the balance; it was just the question of saying what was available. She added that \$26.3 million was a solid number. She explained that the legislative auditors look at the statute being followed. She stated that their reports will vary in distinguishing between realized earnings and nonrealized earnings.

MR. ABBOTT stated that the Legislative Audit helped to clearly understand that there is a difference in Trust earnings. Simply, it is realized versus unrealized, but more complicated than that. Half of the earnings are unrealized and, therefore, not spendable. If they are not spendable, then they cannot be counted as reserves because the reserves exist so that they can be used. That is a statutory obligation and requirement the Trust has. The hope is that earnings will continue to grow, and this can be revisited on an annual basis.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN called for the question.

CHAIR COOKE took a roll-call vote.

After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Halterman, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Fisher, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)

CHAIR COOKE called a lunch break, and stated that Public Comment is scheduled after that.

(Lunch break.)

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR COOKE stated that the public comment period allows individuals to inform and advise the Board of Trustees of issues, problems or concerns. It is not a hearing. He went through the format and added that the general public is not in attendance at this meeting because of the ongoing COVID concerns. He added that the public is invited to comment via a phone connection. He asked that if anyone wished to make public comment to please identify themselves.

MS. WENGER stated that she lived in Anchorage. She continued that she is the Program Director for Help Me Grow Alaska, and they were fortunate to be a program supported by the Alaska Mental Health Trust. She shared a story about connecting families to the right care at the right time. She explained that developmental screening uses a standardized validated tool to identify children at risk for development delays. Through the supports provided by the Trust, Help Me Grow Alaska is able to do work across the state to make sure that children have access to developmental screening in their communities. There is a well-trained workforce able to administer those screenings, and calls to staff navigate families for the right care at the right time. She thanked the trustees for their investment in Help Me Grow Alaska, a program of the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Wenger and he asked for the next person.

MS. SMITH-COOLIDGE stated that two people named Eli and Ian would like to talk.

A SPEAKER commented on the Mental Health Trust lease on Ester Dome, the public-use area. This decision has the potential of devaluing inheritances and decreasing the quality of a childhood. This land being looked at is part of this proposed lease agreement. A mine of substantial size on this hill would severely impact the neighborhood. The speaker talked about the impact on his extended family and that four generations of his family lived there. He added that it all would be destroyed with the mine.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the speaker and recognized Ian Wright.

MR. WRIGHT stated he was a resident at Richard Berry Drive and lives a quarter mile away from the proposed lease sales. He noted that his wife had testified at the July 21st meeting over the need for more mental health support services in Fairbanks. The potential need for land on Ester Dome is the wrong approach for generating the revenue it needs. He stated that it is the wrong approach, wrong deal, wrong time, and the wrong place.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Wright and asked for anyone else to make public comment.

MR. FAY stated that he has lived for 35 years at Elliott Highway in Fairbanks. He testified that he was not against mining, but was against the potential for mining to intrude into Fairbanks' residential properties. He continued that, on a personal note, it is important to his entire family, which is behind Ester Dome. They would all be impacted by this and will continue to fight this. He expressed that this project had the potential to ruin this area as a recreational resource. In closing, he stated that it was his opinion that this project was far too close to Fairbanks and would open the door for development that would not be positive for the community. He encouraged reconsideration or at least a redesign of this lease. He thanked them for the opportunity to be heard.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Mr. Fay and recognized Mara, the next speaker.

A SPEAKER stated that she lived in Fairbanks, in the Goldstream Valley. She continued that she was a former exploration geologist and worked on some of prospects on Ester Dome. She echoed and supported all of the comments made by the previous speakers, and also all of the others that may have written to the Trust during the comment period. She raised a concern after going through Millrock's financials, which are accessible on their website. Her concern is that the Mental Health Trust would even consider leasing to a company that has no financial ability to undertake what they say they are going to do, and that their subsidiaries are newly formed. She added that Felix Gold was formed by two gentlemen with no history in exploration of mining. She stated her dismay in that it seemed that due diligence on either of these companies was not done.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the speaker and asked if there was someone else in the queue.

A SPEAKER stated that she was a resident of Ester Dome and lives in the small neighborhood that is surrounded and, in theory, is supposed to be safe from development because it is above a beautiful area that is Mental Health Trust land. This area and trails are beautiful, and people

have been making use of them hiking and biking, which is great for mental health. She talked about the Native land and appreciated having been able to add comments to the letters that have already been sent.

CHAIR COOKE recognized the next speaker.

A SPEAKER commented on the Ester Dome mining being considered. He stated support for the Mental Health Trust position and understood that trustees have an advisory role. Industrial mining is devastating to residential property owners, and he urged the Trust to suspend the lease, sale. Most importantly, public hearings should be held to hear what the neighbors have to say and to consider the economic and growth potential of residential neighborhoods in the lease area.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the caller and asked for anyone else wishing to make public comment. He recognized Jennifer Reed.

MS. REED stated appreciation for the Trust's efforts to provide mental health services to Alaska's residents. She stated support for that mission. She continued that she was a resident of the Goldstream Valley, and this is a whole community health issue, the Alaska community. There are needs across the state for mental health services, but to utilize such an inappropriate area to generate revenue for Mental Health Trust resources is unconscionable. The Trust should recognize its responsibility to be transparent. She added that the community, for the purpose of mental health resource development, deserves more than the method that is moving forward. She asked to not forward leases to Felix Gold and to consider other ways resources can be generated through Trust lands by working with the community to enhance the tourism potential and other recreational opportunities that exist in the Goldstream Valley.

CHAIR COOKE thanked Ms. Reed and asked for anyone else for public comment.

MS. SMITH-COOLIDGE stated there is someone named Janna who would like to make public comment.

A SPEAKER echoed the comments that were made before. She also echoed the comments she sent in her written public testimony. She urged all to move slowly and cautiously on this. There are not a lot of good recreational activities that can be done in an area as unique as Ester Dome and Goldstream Valley. Lower-income folks rely on this which does benefit not only their health and well-being, but also the community's. She added that she is a lawyer in town, and this would impact multiple neighborhoods. She hoped that the Trust would use its wisdom and consider all impacts on many households.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the caller and asked for any additional persons wishing to make public comment.

A SPEAKER stated that there are several people who would like to make comments, but have not been able to join on the phone.

CHAIR COOKE understood the technological challenges. There being no one else requesting to make public comment, he called the public comment period on the agenda to an end. He added that if there are any additional people who have not been heard, written comments are always

welcome. He called a recess.

(Break.)

FY22 AMENDED BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAIR COOKE moved to the FY22 amended budget recommendations and asked for the motion.

MOTION: A motion for the Full Board to approve increasing the Fiscal Year '22 budget by \$1,596,300. These increases will include \$317,200 of Agency funds; \$74,100 of MHTAAR funds; and \$1,205,000 of Authority Grant funds, and are outlined in the table below, was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE BOERNER.

CHAIR COOKE asked Mr. Abbott to continue.

MR. ABBOTT stated that this was talked about at the Program & Planning Committee meeting, and we are in the fortunate circumstance of having significantly more available revenue in FY22 than was thought when the budget was built. He called attention to the revenue estimate for FY22 which identified the different categories of revenues available. He went through explaining how it was calculated, and then explained that the anticipated payout would be \$26,435,000. He continued that, assuming support for the motion, there would still be \$1 million of unobligated funds yet to allocate during the year. He assured the trustees that staff would bring proposals to make sure that all of that would be allocated during the year. He added that FY23 will be discussed tomorrow, and it also has significantly more revenue than was previously thought.

CHAIR COOKE recognized Steve Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS stated that a short narrative was included that gave a synopsis for how each of the proposed increases would be allocated. He went through all of the recommendations, answering questions as he went along.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked if the Trust funds are being leveraged to pursue Federal funds for some of the at-risk populations with regard to housing.

MS. BARSTAD stated that, for the rapid rehousing, this specific project is not directly leveraged with Federal HUD funding. She added that a way to leverage the service component and figure out how to combine the 1115 waiver services with the housing assistance that this grant would provide is being pursued. There is a federal component, but not necessarily where it is expected.

MR. WILLIAMS continued going through the recommendations, explaining as he went along.

CHAIR COOKE asked for any further questions regarding the proposed amendments to the budget.

TRUSTEE BOERNER called the question.

After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Fisher, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Halterman, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)

CHAIR COOKE called a recess.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE reconvened the meeting and welcomed Commissioner Adam Crum, Department of Health and Social Services.

COMMISSIONER CRUM thanked all for having him back and that it was good to see everyone in person. He stated that there are a couple of items being worked on and began with the reorganization of the department. This has been an ongoing conversation over the interim between sessions and was approved by Governor Dunleavy in January of 2021. This will continue to be pursued, and he added that some changes were pointed out by Legal. He continued that this opportunity is being used to reach groups directly: child welfare groups, child advocacy, Alaska Native Tribal organizations. He shared a metaphor of going to a really nice deli and getting a sandwich that comes with an olive with a toothpick on top. That olive is the Commissioner's Office, and all that is being proposed is to cut the sandwich in half and to add another olive -- taking the existing Health and Social Services structure and really aligning it. Taking the groups that provide patient care services, Juvenile Justice, Alaska Psychiatric Institute, the Pioneer Homes, Office of Child Services, these groups that provide 24/7 direct patient care in a facility and in the community, and on the other side, Medicaid services, health-care services, Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Public Assistance and Senior and Disability Services would align into the Department of Health. We are working with them and the Division of Public Health because this is more about program management, process and payment. He continued that in looking at Health and Social Services, the sheer size of it does not really allow for good, effective management across the board. He pointed out that it is the opposite of a power grab; Alaskans are given a disservice with the current structure. There is not enough time and energy to truly work with stakeholders within the community, with advocates and with legislators to really address issues. He talked about the cost, the current budget and providing the right level of management, resource and compensation. He also stated the need to actually engage and empower the local tribes and communities to step up and enter the space as much as possible. This is not about growing government; it is about appropriate government. There is a need to step in front of this, insert leadership over on that side to work with Federal partners to step into this. This is a conversation that has been had around Alaska, and it will continue. He talked about the Crisis Now model and was proud to say that the Anchorage Fire Department got signed up as an 1115 provider under Medicaid, which is a tremendous asset to have. In looking toward this, he would like to work together and perhaps there are training opportunities that can be done with the Trust as Alaskans are further encouraged to step into the behavioral health world. He stated that he would be glad for any questions or dialogue.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the Commissioner.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN asked for an update about where the State is on the cyberattack and where AKAIMS is.

COMMISSIONER CRUM stated that in May there was a cyberattack that hit Health and Social Services that was very disruptive towards the systems. It was a very sophisticated break. Federal law enforcement partners are on it, and they are not even allowed to talk about which agencies are involved. He added that the process is hardening their systems, and we have to manually take backup information, reinsert it and build up a server behind a fire wall. He explained this more fully.

TRUSTEE BOERNER thanked the Commissioner for the update. She asked if the Commissioner would provide a current picture as to where staffing is considering the COVID surge; and if the front-line staff is experiencing more challenges in their own mental health.

COMMISSIONER CRUM replied that, in looking at the health-care system overall in Alaska, it is in a unique spot because a lot of professionals exited the field in 2020. It was the overall burden of the new protocols, redesigning systems as they went along. Declaring a public health emergency was allowed, which ended the disaster declaration.

MR. ABBOTT received a letter from the Governor, and one of his recommendations is that the Trust join with the Department to work on a plan to utilize, among other resources, opioid litigation settlement funds. The letter suggested that the Commissioner was available to help discuss the details of that.

COMMISSIONER CRUM replied that one of the ideas is the success in a lawsuit against opioid producers, and we joined in and accepted that. They were also successful in reaching the 90 subregions around the state and getting the community leaders to agree to join the State, which means the maximum benefit from the settlement. He added that at this time there are no dollars tied to that, and the time frame is unknown.

MR. WILLIAMS thanked the Commissioner. He noted that Crisis Now is a partnership which the Governor sponsored some legislation on last session, and the Trust is working closely with the Department on that. It is a key piece of legislation to forward those efforts. He stated that it was also great working with the team and other staff throughout the Department on a number of joint efforts related to some of the things that the trustees will be looking at in the FY23 budget recommendations. He reminded the trustees that the Trust had been working closely with the Department on some of the issues encountered related to API. The trustees approved funding to turn around some of the things identified in the Morris lawsuit, and he assured all that there is a good flow of communication back and forth, and they will be kept informed.

CHAIR COOKE thanked the Commissioner for being here today, noting that he was welcome anytime. He commented that the last time he saw the Commissioner was in Rampart, Alaska, on the Yukon River. He encouraged the trustees and others in Government to take advantage of any opportunity that may come along to get out to the other parts of Alaska, the rural areas, to villages, to see the places and people that we only hear about.

COMMISSIONER CRUM looked forward to being at more meetings to have conversations like this. He thanked the Board for what they do and appreciated the time here. He stated he would be glad to come back and address them again.

CHAIR COOKE called a five-minute break.

(Break.)

CHAIR COOKE continued that the next item on the agenda is the Resource Management Committee report.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

CHAIR COOKE stated that there was a memo with the motion. He asked for a motion.

MOTION: A motion that the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees approve the proposed revisions to the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority was made by TRUSTEE STURGEON; seconded by TRUSTEE BOERNER.

MR. ABBOTT introduced Deputy Commissioner Sara Longan from DNR. He stated that she was instrumental in helping advance this amended MOU for final consideration, and we are grateful that she could be here in case there were any questions from the trustees for the Department of Natural Resources. He also reminded all that this is the contract that describes the relationship between the Trust and the Department of Natural Resources that caused the TLO to be created, and it generally describes its work. He added that this was the third iteration of this document, and it does not represent any significant changes to the status quo. It primarily memorializes an incredibly efficient and productive relationship between the Trust Authority and the Department as lived through the Trust Land Office. He strongly endorsed this MOU and the relationship it extends.

MR. MENEFEE stated, for the record, that this was reviewed in detail during the Resource Management Committee, and he went through all the changes. He continued that this will help clarify processes, management principles, organizational structures, and delegated duties. He added that one of the main things it spells out is: Here are the duties of the TLO. The past MOU did not have that. The key about having an MOU like this in place is if there are changes of CEOs, executive directors, changes in the Commissioner's office, to have a congruent document that can be referenced on how to behave with each other. He stated that once these revisions are in place, it will stay current for many years, just like the last one did.

MR. STURGEON agreed. A lot of time was spent on it, and Jusdi did a great job of hitting all the high points.

MR. MENEFEE asked Deputy Commissioner Longdan for any comments.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LONGAN thanked Mr. Menefee, the Trust Land Office, Mr. Abbott and the Board for the interest in taking up the MOU. There was a longstanding, productive and a consistent relationship between DNR, the Trust Land Office, and the Mental Health Trust. She thanked all for the support on the MOU, and for inviting her.

MR. ABBOTT stated that, assuming the motion passes, the next step would be to sign it.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN called the question.

After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Fisher, yes; Trustee Sturgeon, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Trustee Boerner, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Halterman, yes; Trustee Cooke, yes.)

MR. ABBOTT stated that this would be the last opportunity as a group to appreciate the long and amazing service of Wyn Menefee as Trust Land Office Executive Director. Mr. Menefee's retirement is Tuesday, and this is the last Trust meeting to have a chance to work with him directly.

CHAIR COOKE stated that he and Mr. Menefee are the only ones in the room that remember when he became the director of the TLO. He talked about the great job of leadership in that office since that time, and everyone, both past and current, are the beneficiaries of Mr. Menefee's hard work, organizational skills and clear and thorough presentations. He pays attention to detail and has the interest of the Trust at heart at all times. The Trust appreciates everything he has done for all these years.

TRUSTEE STURGEON wished Mr. Menefee a joyful retirement and complimented him on the fantastic job he had done. He stated that he talked with Mr. Menefee about every Friday for his briefing and was always impressed with his grasp of the issues. He thanked him for all of his hard work.

TRUSTEE BOERNER stated that she only knew Mr. Menefee in this TLO role and commented that he addressed it with patience and the willingness to share knowledge. She thanked him for his service, his approach, the mentoring and the comforted way in which he approached it, giving time for all to adjust.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LONGAN stated that Mr. Menefee was kind, and is a true statesman. He took the job at the Trust Land Office, and prior to that he was a colleague at DNR. The bump in the road was when DNR lost Mr. Menefee. They served in the Department for many years together, and he was a mentor, a friend and a strong leader. He will be missed. She congratulated him.

MR. MENEFEE stated appreciation for all the kind words. He added that the only reason he had any credibility was because of the TLO staff and complimented them for being such a professional, dependable staff. They made him shine. He continued that it had been wonderful to serve with the Trust and to be involved with such a noble mission, and to be able to see that we could actually contribute in a meaningful way to the beneficiaries and to the State. It was a wonderful career to have had in doing that through DNR, and then at the Trust Land Office. He thanked all and stated that he would very much enjoy his retirement.

MR. ABBOTT stated that to make sure the trustees know that the Trust Land Office will remain in good hands, it was learned this morning that the Governor signed off on the appointment of Jusdi Doucet as the new Trust Land Office Executive Director.

(Applause)

CHAIR COOKE asked for a motion.

MOTION: A motion to recess the meeting was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN.

CHAIR COOKE recessed the meeting.

(Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Full Board Meeting recessed at 3:15 p.m.)